

MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA HUMAN RIGHTS & RELATIONS COMMISSION
APRIL 24, 2012
7:00 pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Seidman called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Answering roll call were Commissioners Cashmore, Erhardt, Finsness, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, and Student Members Aderhold and Nolan. Staff present: Lisa Schaefer, Human Resources Director and Staff Liaison; and Susan Howl and Candy Fiedler, administrative staff.

III. MEETING AGENDA APPROVED

Motion was made by Commissioner Stanton and seconded by Commissioner Cashmore approving the meeting agenda of April 24, 2012.

Ayes: Cashmore, Erhardt, Finsness, Newell, Seidman, Stanton and Winnick. Motion carried.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA ADOPTED

Motion was made by Commissioner Winnick and seconded by Commissioner Cashmore approving the minutes from the Regular Meeting of March 27, 2012 with the following changes:

VI.C. Commissioner Finsness requested to change Item VI.C. from "...a quote by Pope John Paul and a photo of Al Franken with the Energy and Environment Commission should not have been used in the presentation" to "Commissioner Finsness questioned the appropriateness of a quote by John Paul and photo of Al Franken with the Energy and Environment Commission being used."

Ayes: Cashmore, Erhardt, Finsness, Newell, Seidman, Stanton and Winnick. Motion carried.

VI.D. The motion made by Commissioner Stanton should have stated, "change the date of the September meeting from September 25th to September 20th".

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

There were no community comments.

A plaque and gift certificate were presented to Administrative Staff Representative Howl for appreciation of her years of service with the HRRC.

VI. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

VI.A. Conflict-Free Initiative (Procurement Policy)

Motion was made by Commissioner Cashmore and seconded by Commissioner Winnick to send the Resolution Expressing Support for the Purchase of Products Containing only Conflict-Free Minerals to the City Council.

Staff Liaison Schaefer noted that a proposed resolution would normally be discussed at a joint HRRC – Council workshop. Since the council has not been briefed on this issue, staff will forward the information to the City Council to determine if it could go directly to a council meeting. Since it is not

time sensitive, it will likely not be on the May 1st meeting. Commissioner Cashmore will notify Rachel Pream Grenier from the High School STAND Initiative of the progress with the Resolution.

Motion was amended by Commissioner Cashmore and seconded by Commissioner Winnick to approve the Resolution as amended by Commissioner Newell changing the word “whom” to “which” in Item 2 of the Resolution and forward the Resolution to City Council.

Ayes: Cashmore, Erhardt, Finsness, Newell, Seidman, Stanton and Winnick. Motion carried.

VI.B. Debrief Tom Oye Award Process

Commissioner Winnick presented a recap of the Tom Oye Award which was given to City Staff Member Joyce Repya at the Volunteer Awards Reception, noting that it was a heart-warming event. He added that thanks to City Staff Member Bennerotte, the event was communicated to a number of sources, including Scott Neal’s Blog, and the “About Town” publication, which added to the success of the event. Commissioner Winnick also suggested that for next year, posters and/or emails could go to Edina merchants along with the schools to possibly get more candidates nominated. Staff Member Howl noted that the Volunteer Awards Reception had been videoed, and would be available for viewing on Edina’s website by the end of next week.

Commissioner Finsness questioned if the use of a rubric would be more helpful in the voting process. She had abstained from voting because it was difficult for her to make a decision based on the three selection criteria items from the Nomination Form. Commissioner Cashmore said he felt rubrics were not being used any longer and thought they were used in educational facilities years ago. Members Newell and Finsness stated that rubrics are used in situations where the number of applicants is greater than the number of available positions, and the applicants have varied experiences.

Commissioner Stanton moved that Commissioner Finsness, with help from Commissioner Winnick , design a rubric and bring this back to the July meeting. Commissioner Newell seconded the motion.

Ayes: Erhardt, Finsness, Newell, Seidman, Stanton and Winnick. Abstain: Cashmore. Motion carried.

VI.C. Communication Procedures

Staff Liaison Schaefer presented a handout, HRRC City Contact Information, and explained the best way to contact city staff.

- She asked that all emails be sent to both her and Administrative Staff Member Fiedler. Staff Liaison Schaefer attempts to respond the same day when possible. The informational sheet also included instructions regarding media contacts and how to handle media requests. It was explained that once the council has taken action on a policy, the HRRC should generally refer media requests to the council unless asked by the City Council to respond. Commissioners should be clear as to whether they are representing the HRRC, or just stating their personal opinion. Commissioner Erhardt asked if there would be a penalty for not following the guidelines. Staff Liaison Schaefer explained it is not meant to be a legally binding document, just suggestions for best practices. Individuals have the right to voice their opinions to the media. However, speaking against the decision of the HRRC can undermine its credibility. Commissioner Erhardt asked if this was a new policy of city management, and why is it being implemented now. Staff Liaison Schaefer said the document is just meant to be a “tips sheet” and was developed in response to the HRRC Commissioners requesting guidelines to follow if they were approached by media. It is not a formalized city policy.

VI.D. Work Plan

VI.D.1. Procurement Policy

This item was discussed in VI.A. Conflict-Free Initiative (Procurement Policy) above.

VI.D.2. Monitor Domestic Partner Ordinance

Commissioner Cashmore reported he was still working on Section 4 of the Ordinance and had no more information to report at this meeting.

VI.D.3. Initiate Census Research Funding Recommendation

Commissioner Stanton reported he was “spinning wheels” on this. He said that Val Burke, Director of Community Education Services for the School District, had recommended he get in touch with the Southdale YMCA for information on new immigrant members of the community, find out who the leaders or spokespeople are, and talk with them to find out if there are issues that HRRC can help them resolve. Commissioner Stanton said he would contact the Southdale YMCA and Commissioner Newell added she would like to assist him with this item. Commissioner Cashmore said he would look at the NY Times website (which Commissioner Finsness had mentioned) to find out what data they could come up with and bring this information to the May meeting. The web site is <http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/map>.

VI.D.4. Update Bias/Hate Crimes Response Plan

Commissioner Winnick reported he had met with Police Chief Long and was referred to talk with Staff Member Molly Anderson to coordinate efforts regarding this item. Commissioner Cashmore said that everyone present should make an effort to do a “Ride Along” with the Edina Police to see what crimes take place and what really happens in Edina. He added he has a whole new perspective on the Police Department. Staff Liaison Schaefer said she would talk to Chief Long to arrange this for those interested.

VI.D.5. Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals

Commissioner Seidman handed out some information on the US Holocaust Memorial Museum Traveling Exhibition regarding Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals, which was being held at the Elmer Anderson Library. Commissioner Cashmore reported that he, and Commissioners Seidman, Winnick and Kingston had attended the opening gala of the exhibit, it was an excellent event, and he encouraged everyone to see the exhibition. Also handed out was a copy of the April 19, 2012 Edina Sun- Current article regarding the event.

Commissioner Finsness stated she had wanted to go but did not receive an email regarding this. Commissioner Cashmore suggested that future emails use “Event Notice – Response Required” in the subject line so these emails will stand out from all other emails being distributed. Commissioner Cashmore stated that information for the event was noted in the previous month’s minutes.

This Work Plan is now completed.

VI.D.6. Anti-bullying Event and Education

Commissioner Finsness gave an update on The Bully Project movie which ran at the Lagoon Theater. It has completed its run at that theater, but there will be additional showings around the country.

Student Member Nolan said that a multi-cultural event was held at the High School. Students representing different countries had displays including dance, music, magic, and poetry. Member Nolan

along with Rachel Pream Grenier from STAND, had met with the Principal to see about exhibiting Days of Remembrance information in the display case. It was not available when requested but she has been meeting with history teachers to see what they can do. Member Nolan will bring to the next meeting a fuller picture of what it will look like.

VI.D.7. Marriage Amendment Forum

Commissioner Stanton had nothing new to report on this item. He said he has checked with the League of Women Voters and they were not interested in a joint effort, and added that more guidance was necessary from the City Attorney. Taxpayer dollars cannot be used to advocate a position.

Commissioner Erhardt stated that personal contributions could be used and accepted.

VI.D.8. Diversity Awareness Event

This item is pending and will be discussed at the May meeting.

VI.D.9. Days of Remembrance

The proclamation for the Days of Remembrance was signed by the mayor. Posters were displayed at City Hall.

Student Member Nolan will report on Days of Remembrance Activities at the High School at the May meeting.

VI.D.10. Somali Relief Efforts

Commissioner Newell reported that she was still waiting to hear from the American Refugee Committee volunteer representative who has promised to make introductions to the Edina Somali community. She explained the opportunity to accompany Member Stanton to the Southdale YMCA might provide another avenue.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

VII.A. Letter from Laird Beaver to Councilmember Swenson

Staff Liaison Schaefer explained that the letter was referred to the HRRC from Councilmember Swenson to see if it was something that should be explored by the HRRC. The letter pertained to the right of corporations to speak politically through Political Action Committees.

Commissioner Stanton thought this was a political issue, not something for this Commission to look into. Student Member Aderhold said his opinion was that this was something the Commission should look into. It has to do with individuals having the ability to express their voice at the Capitol and that it's not right that money gets people in the "fast line" to speak to politicians. Commissioner Newel supported Member Aderhold's view that this should be an issue for the HRRC. Commissioner Stanton thought the commission should remember their mission, and not to go looking for other issues. Commissioner Stanton thought issues such as Voter ID should be addressed.

Commissioner Finsness will speak with the other cities mentioned in the letter to see who initiated the resolution in the cities listed in the letter from Beaver (was it forwarded as a human rights issue in those other cities) and will report back at either the May or June meeting. Staff Liaison Schaefer will send a note to Councilmember Swenson informing her of what is being done regarding the letter.

VIII. CHAIR AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Student Member Nolan discussed the lack of maintenance of the Jewish Cemetery on France Avenue and was wondering if this is something that the HRRC could help with by contacting either the owner or the City's Park Maintenance people to take care of. Commissioner Winnick said he would look into the issue as part of the Bias Crime Response Plan, speak with the Police Department, and visit with the adjacent cemetery leadership regarding preventing hate crime accessibility. Commissioner Finsness added that this could potentially be an Eagle Scout project or perhaps a letter to the editor could be written about the topic. Commissioner Winnick indicated he would like to speak with the police department before taking any further action.

IX. STAFF COMMENTS

Staff Liaison Schaefer said that, with new staff, it has been a little more challenging to capture the meeting minutes accurately. As previously requested, a draft of the minutes has been sent out the week following the meeting. She requested that Commissioners try to review the minutes at this time and notify staff if something is incorrect. Staff can make changes prior to including in the packet for the vote.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business on the Commission Agenda, Vice Chair Seidman declared the meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Minutes approved by HRRC, May 22, 2012

Candy Fiedler, Administrative Staff

Jan Seidman, HRRC Vice Chair